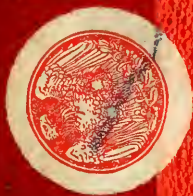




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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

LEAP-YEAR.

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS,
FOR NINE CHARACTERS.

By SUSA S. VANCE,

AUTHOR OF

"LOUIS CARROL" AND "NATURE WINS."

CHAS. W. FASSETT,
"PLEASURE AND PROFIT" PRINTING HOUSE,
ST. JOSEPH, MO.

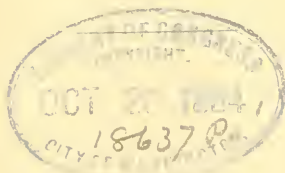
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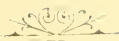
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DEDICATED TO
MY GOOD FRIEND, MR. JAMES CRAIG, JR.



DESCRIPTION OF COSTUMES.

Mrs. Rosa Vane—First act, handsome morning dress. Second act, handsome evening dress. Third and fourth acts, dishabille with hair in curl-papers; dressing wrapper would do.

Gladys Vane—First act, a short, close-fitting dress of a school girl; a Jersey suit would do. Second act, a short pale pink or blue "Mother Hubbard." Hair hanging and curled in both first and second acts. Third and fourth acts, a nicely fitting tailor-made suit of boy's clothes. Hair tucked up on top of head under a hat to match suit. Walking cane.

Max Morris—Gentleman's suit.

Mrs. Oliver—A handsome walking suit throughout the play.

Miss Sarah Boggs—A plain dress in first and second acts. In third and fourth acts a dressing wrapper, with night cap in part of third act.

LEAP-YEAR.

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS.

LIST OF CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Rosa Vane, a young stepmother.

Miss Gladys Vane, her step-daughter.

Mr. Max Morris.

Mr. Oliver, an old husband.

Mrs. Minnie Oliver, a young wife.

Miss Sarah Boggs, an old maid.

Mr. Patrick Vane.

Hopkins, a footman.

A Policeman.

ACT 1.

(A Drawing Room Scene — Hopkins Dusting Furniture.)

Hopkins (dusting portrait of a gentleman.) That 'ere is a h'object for to move a man's 'art or a woman's either ; which it don't touch my lady's feelings, though, enough to keep her from flirting around among the men or going on yachting trips. What's more, besides, I rather believe as 'ow she is a thinking of getting married again, though he (pointing to picture) h'ar'nt been dead h'and in his grave but little better than a year. I never dust that 'ere picture without thinking on 'ow the telegraph come that day sayin' that my master was killed in the railroad h'accident, and so mangled h'up that we never would have knowed it was 'im h'except for the valise found beside 'im, which 'ad 'is name h'on it. I didn't h'even know the clothes 'ee 'ad on when they brought the corpse home. 'Ee h'and the missus 'ad 'ad a little row, and 'ee 'ad been away about two weeks. Their rows didn't signify nothing though. They were common.

Howsomever 'ee went h'off that time in little more of a tiff than I h'ever seen 'im h'in, and I wouldn't take my h'oath 'hon it that 'ee warn't a little the worse for liquor, poor man. 'Ee wasn't brought up h'exactly what h'I should call a gentleman, but 'ee 'ad made lots of cash h'and was a h'orful good master. Lord, 'ow generous he was to h'us with the h'ale! That's why it always touches my 'eart and brings the tears to my h'eyes to clean that 'ere picture. The more shame to his fine lady wife for forgettin' the poor man so soon.

(*Enter Mrs. Vane, c. F., with flowers.*)

Mrs. Vane. Hopkins, have you finished dusting.

Hop. Yes, mum.

Mrs. Vane. Well, you may go now. I am expecting a caller directly. You can ask him in here.

Hop. Yes, mum. (*Exit L.*)

Mrs. Vane. (*arranging flowers in vase*). After an absence of a year and a half spent in London and traveling, I find myself once more at home where everything reminds me of my lost husband—my poor Patrick—and the little step-daughter, whose very existence I had almost forgotten. It is an unpleasant sensation to realize that Gladys has grown from a child to a good-looking woman during my absence, but I must take care that neither she nor any one else realizes that fact for awhile yet. After I am happily married to the man of my choice, then her turn will come to enjoy society, and I must endeavor to secure her a husband as soon as it becomes convenient to myself. In the meantime she must remain in the schoolroom. Max has begun to take entirely too much notice of her.

(*Enter Miss Sarah Boggs, L.*)

Miss Sarah. I suppose, Mrs. Vane, you have no objection to my plucking a few flowers for the purpose of analyzing.

Mrs. Vane. Certainly not, Miss Sarah. Any flowers in the conservatory are yours except the light pink verbenas. I reserve those for my own wearing. They so delightfully suit my delicate complexion, you know.

Miss Sarah. Yes they match beautifully, I am sure. (*aside*) She ought to send to Paris for her flowers, where she sends for her complexion, and have them equally artificial.

Mrs. Vane. You can help yourself to any of the other flowers, Miss Sarah, though I can't understand what pleasure you can find in tearing the pretty things to pieces. I suppose—ha! ha! ha! science is the only amusement left to a maiden lady of your age.

Miss Sarah. Doubtless, Mrs. Vane, it is difficult for you to

understand that knowledge is its own reward and its own justification; (*aside*) but I have not yet found out anything about Max Morris. I wish she would mention his name.

Mrs. Vane (aside). If she were not necessary to me just at present I would send her out of the house fast enough; the troublesome creature! (*Aloud*). Speaking of knowledge, my dear Miss Sarah, don't you think we had better put our little Gladys to work, and have her study a little more?

Miss Sarah. That is easier said than done. Gladys is now sixteen years old, and ignorant though she be, she declares her intention to give up her school books. I have given her what I consider merely an elementary education because she would take no other. She was very obstinate and studied only such books as interested her. She cares nothing for psychological inquiry, nor for philosophical questions, nor for any of the sciences in which I delight. It has been a great disappointment to me that I have been unable to interest her in my more deeply scientific studies and experiments.

Enter Gladys, R.

Gladys. Such, for instance, as dissecting frogs and other creatures and examining their parts through a microscope, or trying experiments on them with galvanic battery. Thank you, I would rather know the poor things from their natural habits, and from seeing their delight in their free life of the woods. Rose, I am tired of Aunt Sarah's "ologies" and "isms." Only this morning she wanted me to study an awful book called "The Evidence for Evolution in the History of the Extinct Mammalia." Only think of it. It is enough to give one St. Vitus' dance only to learn the names of her books.

Miss Sarah. I fear Mrs. Vane that this child has grown up into a sad dunce, notwithstanding the advantages of my instruction. If she had chosen she might have been as well educated as if you had procured all the finest professors in the city of Dublin. My labor has been in vain.

Gladys. Not entirely in vain, Aunt. You have made so many pounds a year and we have have had a pleasant, easy time of it here in our suburban home. I must say it is pleasanter now, though, since Rose has come, and brought some men with her.

Miss Sarah. Heavens! What is to become of such a child?

Mrs. Vane. It is inelegant to say *men* Gladys, you must say gentlemen. I am afraid that you have seen the gentle-

men too often lately. What book have you there. One of your lesson books I hope.

Gladys—No, it is *Ivanhoe*, by Sir Walter Scott. A lovely romance.

(Sits on Table and swings feet and eats apple.)

Mrs. Vane. You are entirely too young to read novels. You will be getting your head full of sentimental nonsense. It is hardly to be wondered at, Miss Sarah, that the child does not find interest in your abstruse studies, but I wish you would keep her more in the school room and out of the drawing room.

Miss Sarah (aside). I don't like that woman's tone of authority. Though she be rich and I poor she need not speak to me as if I were a menial. She is jealous of Gladys. *(Aloud.)* Mrs. Vane, I don't think that either you or I can compel her to longer pursue her studies.

Mrs. Vane. If you consider that she has graduated she is not much of a credit to you, with such manners as that. Gladys, it is not very lady-like to sit upon the table.

Gladys. You call me a child. I am not yet a lady. [*Holding out apple.*] Have a bite Rose? Have a bite Aunt Sarah? I hope there isn't any scientific name for apples; they wouldn't taste nearly so well if there were.

Mrs. Vane. You are a very provoking creature. Where did you learn such rough manners? I do believe it is the common blood showing itself in her. My poor Patrick had his virtues, Miss Sarah, but he also had his faults. You know that he was not the most elegant gentleman in the world. She inherits her coarseness from her father.

Gladys (jumping down from table). You shall never speak disrespectfully of my father in my presence, Rose. Say what you like of me, but his name must be held sacred. If you do not respect him as your lost husband, you must remember that he was my dear father. If he did speak with an Irish brogue his voice was sweet to my ears. Even though he did make his money running a factory he was something rare—an honest man.

Miss Sarah. Don't become excited Gladys. Nobody doubted your father's kindness or goodness. We all know that he was not exactly an elegant gentleman or a well educated man.

Gladys. I won't hear you speak so of him, Aunt Sarah, though you were my mother's sister. Don't ever mention my father's name again.

Mrs. Vane. Gladys, it is not respectful in you to speak so to a lady of your Aunt's age.

Miss Sarah. I am as young as you are, Rosa Vane.

Gladys. Neither you or Rose are so terribly young, Aunt.

Miss Sarah. It is not respectful in you, Gladys, to say Rose to a lady of your stepmother's age. Why don't you call her mamma?

Mrs. Vane. Because I prefer to have her call me Rose. I am too young to be called mamma by so large a girl.

Miss Sarah (aside). That is because she is setting her cap for our handsome young neighbor, Max Morris. I shall frustrate her designs if I possibly can. I should make a better wife than this fashionable doll baby with all her airs and graces, and he would make me a happy woman. As this is leap-year, I intend to forestall her and let him understand the nature of my feelings toward him. He cannot fail to appreciate a woman of my superior education. But it is necessary to be polite to these two dunces. (*Aloud.*) Where did you get those flowers you have pinned to your dress, Gladys? That blue flower is a very rare variety.

Gladys. Spare us the botanical name, Aunt Sarah. It is only a little innocent wild flower I found.

Miss Sarah. I should like to dissect and analyze it. The round flat edge; the upper petals perfectly uniform--there is a flower that defies criticism.

Gladys. You may have it, Aunt Sarah--there. I shouldn't have the heart to do it myself. It has hurt my conscience a little to pluck them from their parent stems and doom them to a premature death.

Mrs. Vane (looking at her watch). Would it not be just as convenient for you two to talk the flowery language of sentiment and science in the school room? I have an engagement; in fact am expecting one of my admirers.

Miss Sarah (aside). Vain little fool! She wants to get rid of me because *he* is coming.

Gladys. Oh, Rose, if it is that delightful Max Morris, do let me stay and see him. I like him so much, and know he likes me.

Mrs. Vane. No; you are too young and rude to remain in the drawing room. The school room is the more fitting place for a dreadful child like you. Will you take her to her studies Miss Sarah? Keep her in the school room for the next three months and your salary shall be doubled.

Miss Sarah (aside). If I marry *him*, I shall not have to

stoop to receive a salary from *her*. I hope to be richer than she is some day.

(Exeunt Miss S. and Gladys, R.)

Mrs. Vane *(going to mirror and arranging hair and collar)*. I hope I am looking particularly charming to-day. It is time that dear Max should arrive. He is so long coming to the point that I must urge him on a little more. He must be in love with me as he comes so frequently. Dear boy, he is timid and needs some slight encouragement. I have seen him every day while we were on the yachting trip and do not understand why he has not yet proposed. This is leap year. What harm would there be in making love to him a little myself?

(Enter Hopkins, C. F.)

Hop. Mr. Morris, mum.

Mrs. Vane. Show him in here, Hopkins.

[Exit Hop, C. F.]

(Enter Morris, C. F., they shake hands.)

Mrs. Vane. Good morning, Mr. Morris, I am so glad to see you. Do you know it has been two whole days since you called? How could you stay away so long?

Morris. I am sure, madam, it has seemed an age to me. *(Aside)* By, George! I am afraid the woman has been taking our little flirtation in earnest. *(Aloud)* I need not ask if you are well! You are looking most lovely this morning.

Mrs. Vane. Ah, Mr. Morris! But I'd rather call you Max. That sounds more like the dear old times, does it not, when we used to be boy and girl sweethearts?

Morris. Yes, I was awfully in love with you then. Boys of that age generally do have sweethearts older than themselves.

Mrs. Vane. But I was a year younger than you. Let me see, you are twenty-nine, now. Well, I am twenty-eight.

Morris. Are you that young?

Mrs. Vane. You are complimentary. Of course I am that young. I am aware that my troubles and grief have made me seem to have a greater weight of years. The terrible shock on hearing of my husband's death in that frightful railroad accident was enough to make any woman lose her youth and beauty. *(Handkerchief.)*

Morris. But my dear Mrs. Vane—

Mrs. Vane *(sobbing)*. Say Rose.

Morris. My dear Rose, you look as beautiful and almost as youthful as the day when you told me farewell, because,

you said, you were going to be sacrificed to parental authority and marry a rich widower to please your father.

Mrs. Vane. Oh, it was a sad day for me, Max, when I had to tell you farewell.

Morris. I can assure you, Rose, it was a sad day for me, too.

Mrs. Vane (coming quite close to him and looking up in his face persuasively.) But it is not too late to be happy. We are both free.

Morris. Yes, thank God, we are both free!

Mrs. Vane (laying her head on his shoulder.) And I can be yours now.

Morris (confusedly). Yes, you can—that is you might, but—

(Enter Mr. and Mrs. Oliver.)

Mrs. Vane shakes hands with them at back.

Morris (coming forward, aside). What infernal luck this is! I am in love with the girl and here is the step-mother making love to me, and getting me entrapped almost before I know it. I wish old Vane hadn't been smashed up in that railroad accident.

Mrs. Vane. My dear friends, I have some good news to tell you. You must congratulate my dear Max and myself upon our happiness. We have just become engaged. An old love-affair of our youth revived, you know.

Morris (aside). Great Heavens I did not know that I was engaged! I said a moment ago "Thank God I am free," and now, the next moment I am not free. How in the devil did she manage to do it?

Mr. Oliver. I congratulate you my boy. *(Shaking hands.)* Marriage is a happy state; isn't it my love?

Mrs. Oliver (sarcastically). Oh very!

Mr. O. [chucking Mrs. O. under the chin]. I knew she would say that, the little darling, duck of a wife.

Mrs. O. Mr. Oliver, if you please don't make an exhibition of that kind of nonsense in public.

Mr. O. Just as you say, my pet, just as you say. *[To Morris]* She is the most sensible little woman in the world.

Mrs. O. [aside]. I can't believe that Max Morris is going to marry her. I have heard him speak sarcastically of her many a time. I love him so well that my heart tells me he must return my affection.

Gladys. [Enter Gladys, R., bowing to company, shaking hands with Morris]. Oh, Mr. Morris, I am so glad to see you. Rose said that I was too young to come in the parlor when she had gentlemen company. But after you said the other day

that I was the nicest girl in the neighborhood, and that you would try to come to see me every day, I felt as though I could not stay out of the drawing room when I knew you were here.

Mrs. Vane. My dear Max you must not spoil this little girl of mine with such flattery. It would quite turn her head. The place for such a child is in the school room.

Mr. Oliver. Be indulgent to her to-day, madam. She is almost a grown woman. I am sure you don't look much older yourself.

Gladys. She is though—she is thirty-three.

Mrs. Vane. Oh! Gladys, you're mistaken.

Gladys. No, I'm not, Rose. Your age is in the old family Bible up stairs. Why did you take it out of the parlor and put it up in the attic.

Mr. Oliver. One would take her to be at least under twenty-five.

Gladys. That is because she has so much white powder and red paint on her face. You ought to see the pretty little boxes of stuff she keeps on her dressing case to make herself lovely with. She won't let me use them.

Mrs. Oliver. Oh that is because you don't need them, my dear. You are young and fresh enough looking. Of course a woman of thirty-three is not expected to be as innocent of face powder as girls of our age.

Mrs. Vane. I am only two years older than you are, Minnie Oliver.

Mrs. O. I am only twenty-six.

Mrs. Vane. And I am only twenty-eight.

Gladys. Why, Rose, you have forgotten. I'll go and get the family Bible and show you.

Mrs. Vane. Do nothing of the kind you horrible child. Go to your room and stay there. I mean to punish you.

Morris (taking G's hand.) Be calm my dear Rose and consider that Gladys meant no harm. I am sure you would not be unkind to her.

Gladys (sobbing on Morris' shoulder.) She is unkind to me Mr. Morris. She calls me a horrible child, and she locked me up the other day because I gave you some flowers.

Mrs. Vane. Come, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver, we will go into the conservatory and leave this sniffing school-girl in possession of the drawing room, since there is no chance for peaceful conversation here. My dear Max, will you give me your arm.

Morris. Good-bye, Gladys. Don't cry.

(Takes Mrs. V's arm. *Exeunt Mrs. V., Mr. and Mrs. O. and Morris.*)

Gladys. She has always called him Mr. Morris until today. What does it mean? She surely can't want to marry him, as old as she is. Oh, if they did marry, it would break my heart. I don't want him to be my step-father. I love him too well.

(*Enter Miss Sarah, R.*)

Miss Sarah. Gladys, you have been crying. I have often told you that it is very unwise to weep. It not only spoils the appearance, but it injures the digestion. The exertion of shedding tears draws the blood from the stomach to the head, and causes headache and indigestion. What are you laughing at, now, you silly child? You cry one minute and laugh the next.

Gladys. Forgive me for laughing at you, Aunt Sarah; but you do look too ridiculous. You've been putting on some of Rose's paint and powder, and why, I declare, you have actually curled your wig.

Miss Sarah. Be off to your room quick, you disrespectful, tiresome child.

Gladys (aside). Everybody calls me names, and tries to separate me from Mr. Morris. I wonder if she is in love with him too. Oh that would be a good joke. I shall keep up my spirits. (*Singing.*) "It is better to ~~be~~ laughing than sighing." (*Comic dance and song or whistling and dancing.*)

Miss Sarah. Gladys! Gladys! Where do you learn such things? Your want of refinement makes it hard for me to believe that you are my sister's child.

Gladys. I learned it sometime when you had your head buried in scientific books. Good-bye old Aunt Encyclopedia. (*Kisses hand toward door, c. F.*) Those three kisses are for Mr. Morris. (*Exit, L.*)

Miss Sarah. What a dreadful child! She shocks me a dozen times a day.

[*Enter Morris, c. F., shakes hands.*]

Morris. How are you Miss Sarah? Where is Gladys? We left her here.

Miss Sarah. She has gone to her room. How are you, Mr. Morris.

Morris. I am very well in health, Miss Sarah, but wretched in mind. I've gotten into a pickle and do not know how to get out. If I were to confide in you, perhaps you could give me some good advice. Of course all I say is confidential.

Miss Sarah. To be sure ; you can be as confidential to me as you like.

Morris. Well, Rose and I were referring to old times, and when I made some flattering speech to her, she misunderstood me and supposed that I was making love to her. I am sure that I intended nothing of the kind ; but when Mr. and Mrs. Oliver came she announced that we were engaged, and of course I couldn't contradict her. What can I do to get out of it ?

Miss Sarah. Rose is a shallow woman, Mr. Morris. She is quite ignorant when you question her on science or philosophy. She reads nothing but the silliest novels.

Morris. She has no such well-stored mind as yours, Miss Sarah.

Miss Sarah. Your wife should be a woman of culture, Mr. Morris :

Morris. I don't know that I deserve a very wise wife, Miss Sarah, but I do not love Rose. My heart is in the possession of another.

Miss Sarah. I knew it must be so, and that other loves you with a deeper love than Rose is capable of, Max.

Morris. Are you certain that she loves me ? Can you tell me that you really know it to be true ?

Miss Sarah (throwing her arms around his neck). I am certain of it, my dear Max. I am yours, only yours.

(Enter Mrs. V. C. F., she screams and faints.)

(Enter Mr. O. in time to catch Mrs. V. in his arms.)

Miss Sarah. Come, bring her into the conservatory to the fountain, Mr. Oliver. There, perhaps, we can restore this weak woman. (Exit Mrs. V., Miss S. and Mr. O., c. f.)

Morris. Worse and worse !

(Enter Mrs. O., c. f.)

Mrs. Oliver. They are about to wash the paint from her silly face. That will revive her. You don't seem to be very anxious about her, Mr. Morris. Why are you not more love-like to your fiancée ? Confess that you do not love her.

Morris. Oh, Mrs. Oliver ! I am half distracted !

Mrs. O. I can truly sympathize with you.

Morris. Are you unhappy too ?

Mrs. O. I am very unhappily married.

Morris. There is similarity in our condition.

Mrs. O. But you are not married yet, and I can get a divorce. Perhaps, after all, there may be some hope for us. He is too old for me and Mrs. Vane is too old for you. There

is the similarity in our conditions, Besides we love one another, do we not, dear Max? (*Falls into his arms. Enter Mrs. V., Mr O., Miss S. and Gladys, c. F.—Tableau.*)

Curtain.

END OF FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE—*School-room, with window, in flat. A door to the right and a door to the left. Gladys discovered lying on sofa.*

Gladys (rising, yawning and stretching her arms). I have been locked in the school-room so long that the time hangs very heavily. In fact this imprisonment grows monotonous and tiresome. Perhaps Rose has relented and unlocked the door while I was asleep. (*Goes to door at R and tries lock.*) No it is locked fast, and is as unyielding as her malicious disposition. (*Goes to door L. and tries lock.*) That, also, is fast, and the latch grates upon the ears like Aunt Sarah's heartlessness does upon the mind of a motherless girl. (*Sits c.*) They might at least have left me the cat for a companion. She gives me more sympathy than any one in the house. If my poor father had lived my lot would have been very different, or if my good friend, Mr. Oliver, had been appointed my guardian, life would, at least, have been less insupportable.

(*Max Morris puts head in at window.*)

Morris. Halloo, Gladys!

Gladys (jumping up). Why, Mr. Morris, where did you come from?

Morris. From the lower regions, that is, from the garden down below.

Gladys. But how did you get up?

Morris. Brought a ladder from a tree near by. Did you think I might have planted a magic bean and grown a bean stalk by which I could climb up here?

(*Sits in window.*)

Gladys. I know that you come into this school-room like a ray of sunshine, or rather like the fairy god-mother to Cinderella, to cheer a dull, lonely, little girl.

Morris. I can't promise you any Prince's ball, but have brought something better still to a hungry girl. I found out from the maid that you were locked up on bread and water, Gladys, so I brought you a basket of more agreeable food. This is your bill of fare; a cherry tart.

Gladys. O Mr. Morris! how good you are!

Morris. A dozen luscious peaches!

Gladys. You are, indeed a good fairy.

Morris. Some crackers and cheese.

Gladys. Just think of it! Bread and water has well prepared my appetite for such a feast.

Morris. Pickles!

Gladys. This is too much, Mr. Morris. My gratitude overcomes me. I know you are the kindest and best man in the world. Pickles! hum!

Morris. Yes; I thought they were quite indicative of the state we have each been in to-day. I was in a pickle this morning, and you are in a pickle this evening. (*Enters through window in flat*)

Gladys. Yes; Rose said she saw you in Aunt Sarah's arms, and I'm sure I don't think that a very sweet predicament, no matter what you may thing about it, sir!

Morris. I want to explain that to you, Gladys.

Gladys. Rose is the one to whom your explanations are due, sir. She says that you are engaged to her; but I should think that it would be rather difficult to explain away *everything*. We all saw Mrs. Oliver in your arms.

Morris. Rose be hanged, and Mrs. Oliver too! You are the only one to whom I care to explain, Gladys.

Gladys. You want one more victim, do you?

Morris. I confess appearances were against me. But, indeed, Gladys, I was not to blame, unless a man can be blamed for being too polite. It never rains but it pours, and the women fell into my arms this morning as if there had been a cyclone around in this part of the island, which had gathered up a great armful of feminine humanity and dropped them in a heap. Ha! ha! ha! I suppose it is because it is leap-year, and I am the only eligible man in this suburb of Dublin. I don't attribute it to any attractions of my own.

Gladys. I don't consider it a laughing matter.

Morris. Are you jealous, little girl?

(*Takes her hand Gladys indignantly snatches it away.*)

Gladys. Do you think I would be jealous of Rose's *fiancé*?

Morris. But I don't mean to marry Rose. I did not intend to get into an engagement with her. She misunderstood my unmeaning compliments; as did also Miss Sarah and Mrs. Oliver. I wish you would make love to me, too, Gladys, by way of variety. Your style would be different from theirs.

Gladys. Mr. Morris you are so spoiled and conceited that you think every woman who ever looks at you must lose her

heart. You are one of those most detestable creatures in the world—a male flirt.

Morris. Why, Gladys! I didn't think you would abuse me so. Perhaps I deserve it for so thoughtlessly bragging of my conquests. I only meant to amuse you in your imprisonment.

Gladys. I am an orphan, only sixteen years old, and you actually have the assurance to steal your way into my school-room and ask me to make love to you.

Morris. It is leap-year, my dear.

Gladys. You are a horrible man!

Morris. Go on, don't regard my feelings in the least, Miss Vane. Maybe you think a bitter tonic would correct my conceit.

Gladys. The Irish and the English never did agree very well.

Morris. What do you mean?

Gladys. I was born in Ireland and you in England.

Morris. Ah, I understand. I can take a hint as well as any one. I shall not longer intrude upon your presence.

Gladys. You can take your basket of goodies along with you. I have no appetite for them.

Morris. Do you hate me so much that you would not accept a little present like that from me? I shall not take the basket.

Gladys. Very well, Mr. Morris, I can feed the cat on the pickles.

Morris. Cats have better taste than school-girls; she wouldn't eat them.

Gladys. As I am locked in, and there is no escape, I have to submit to being ridiculed in my own school-room.

Morris. I am going. I shall no longer annoy you. I came into this school-room with bright hopes for future happiness, but now I leave it a wretched man. Good-bye, Miss Vane, I never dreamed that you were a cruel, heartless flirt. (*Starting toward window.*)

Gladys. I know nothing about flirting, unless I take lessons from your conduct of the past few days.

Morris. That's right, be as rude to me as you can.

Gladys (*taking seat at side of chair and bowing her head on her arms, which rest on back of chair*). I think it very unkind of you to talk to me so (*sob*). I am a poor little orphan girl (*sob*), shut up here all alone (*sob*), and you get angry with me (*sob*), and leave me, when you know that I love you so, too (*sob*).

Morris (coming forward and sitting on low ottoman beside her). Why Gladys, darling, do you really mean what you say?

Gladys. Don't touch me. You can't flirt with me as you do with the others.

Morris. I don't care a snap of my fingers ever to see the others again in my life. All that I care for now is the delight of knowing that we love each other. (*Taking her hand.*) Did you not know all the time, little girl, that I cultivated Rose's friendship so as to have opportunities to see you.

Gladys (raising head). Did you really?

Morris. And as to Mrs. Oliver, she is a shallow-minded, sentimental woman, who feeds on novels, and fancies for the moment that she is in love with me. It is merely a temporary spell, like the measles, that has seized her. She really didn't mean any harm by it, and you don't blame me, do you Gladys?

Gladys. No, it was all her fault, the forward creature!

Morris. And as for Miss Sarah, I hardly need any exhorting there. Ha! ha! ha! You could not suspect me of feeling any tender sentiment towards her, except those of a dutiful nephew for a maiden Aunt. I would be very glad to have her for my aunt-in-law, Gladys.

Gladys. Y-e-e-s, that would be nice.

Morris. And I would like to have Rose for my step-mother-in-law.

Gladys. Would you?

Morris. And what would that make you?

Gladys. I don't know.

Morris. Oh, yes, you do know, little girl.

Gladys. I thought that I heard some one at the door.

Morris. Perhaps it was the mice coming after your pickles.

Gladys. Wouldn't Rose be angry though if she found you here?

Morris. As she is your guardian I shall have to summon up the courage to go to her and ask for you, Gladys. Do you think that she will give her consent to our marriage?

Gladys. How can you expect her to give her consent. She is in love with you herself and thinks you are engaged to her.

Morris. I can tell her that it was all a mistake, and that I am in love with you.

Gladys. That will make her very angry. She might lock me up in a convent.

Morris. Then there is only one thing to be done. We shall have to run away and get married, before she realizes the situation.

Gladys. Oh! that would be such fun. But how could I get out.

Morris. If you are not still imprisoned to-morrow night you can steal from the house and join me just outside the gate. If you are still locked in here, there is the same ladder by which I climbed up. You can make your escape by coming down from the window. This is my plan: I shall come in about 9 o'clock and throw you up a bundle of clothes, in which you can disguise yourself. Then you can come down to me and off we go.

Gladys (jumping up again). I am quite sure this time there was the sound of creaking shoes outside the door. Now, Max, dear, you must go.

Morris. It is hard to leave you, Gladys, darling, but Rose might catch me here, so I'm off. *(They go to window holding hands.)*

Morris (seating himself across window). Good-bye, Gladys, till to-morrow night. *(They embrace.)*

(Enter Mrs. Vane in time to see G. in his arms.)

Mrs. Vane. I thought I heard a man's voice. Oh, Heavens! It is Max. My Max!

(Enter Miss Sarah, L.)

(Morris disappears down ladder.)

Miss Sarah. Yes, the man you believed to be your betrothed, making love to your step-daughter.

Mrs. Vane. To that child? Such a mere brat as she is! I can hardly believe it.

Miss Sarah. He evidently thinks that she suits him better than you, for they were making plans to run away and get married.

Gladys. If you have any such knowledge, you must have been eaves-dropping, Aunt Sarah. I thought I heard some one crouching against the door. Fie! I didn't think that you would do such a dishonorable thing!

Miss Sarah. You saucy jade! Don't talk about being dishonorable. Any girl who would have a lover steal into her room through the window, has no very fine sense of honor. I had just finished reading an intensely interesting article in a scientific magazine on "atomised charges of electricity conducted into the system by the oxygen of respiration." I was beginning an article on "protoplasm," which was an answer to one that appeared last month on

"bioplasm," when I thought there was a man's voice talking in the school-room. I arose and came to the door, to find out whom this reckless girl was clandestinely entertaining with so little propriety.

(Enter Mrs. Oliver, R.)

Gladys. I am very certain that I could never forget myself so far as to make love to a man who cared nothing about me, as all three of you did.

All. Oh! Oh! Oh!

Mrs. Oliver. What a horrible falsehood. Mrs. Vane you should punish that child. I knew that he was in love with me, or I should never have thought of flirting with the foolish fellow.

Mrs. Vane. My *fiance* in love with you! How can you dare say such a thing?

Mrs. Oliver. You all saw him making love to me.

Miss Sarah. We saw that you had been so shameless as to throw yourself into his arms, and what was worse for you, your husband saw it too. Wasn't he very angry with you?

Mrs. Oliver. No; the good old fellow took me directly home without so much as uttering a single word of reproach. But he is continually silent. I can see that he is suffering. I begin to feel remorseful, because he is made so unhappy.

Gladys. Your husband is a dear, good man, Mrs. Oliver.

Miss Sarah. Yes, he is much too good for her.

Mrs. Oliver. You always were a rude, old maid, mam. Has my husband been here this evening, Mrs. Vane? He had been away so long that I felt uneasy about him.

Mrs. Vane. No, we have not seen him since he took you home this morning. If that was merely an excuse to hunt up Mr. Morris, I can tell you that he has just left here through the window, where he had climbed to see Gladys.

Miss Sarah. Yes, he is in love with Gladys, and they have agreed to marry.

Mrs. Vane. I am her guardian, and I shall never give my consent.

Miss Sarah. They don't intend to ask for it. They have planned to run away.

Mrs. Vane. But I mean to circumvent them. I am going to station Hopkins at the gate to watch every one who comes in and out from the gate to the door. Fortunately our grounds are surrounded by a high wall. You know this used to be the site of a convent, and the wall is still standing. I can also notify the police to keep watch of the place. You might as well make up your mind, Miss, that no escape

is possible. I shall give orders to Hopkins immediately.

(Exit R.)

Miss Sarah. Perhaps Max Morris is still lingering about the grounds. Let us go and see if we can find him.

Mrs. Oliver. If we do we shall give him a piece of our minds.

l. Poor Max! ↓ [Exeunt, L., Miss Sarah and Mrs. Oliver.]
Tomorrow what it is to have a piece of their minds.
(Enter Mr. Oliver, R.)

Mr. Oliver. Good evening, Gladys. I have found my way to the school room to see if I could not help you in some way. I supposed from what Mrs. Vane just said that you were in trouble. On account of my friendship for your poor father, as well as my liking for you, you can always count on me as your friend, my dear little girl.

Gladys. Oh, Mr. Oliver you are the only friend I have in the world—except Mr. Morris.

Mr. Oliver. And he has been showing his friendship by climbing in the window to see you.

Gladys. Yes; to bring me this basket of food. Rose was starving me on bread and water.

Mr. O. Was that all he came for, Gladys?

Gladys. No, sir; he came to tell me that I was the only woman in the world he cared for and wanted to marry, and that he had only cultivated Rose's friendship for the purpose of making opportunities so see me.

Mr. O. I suspected that, all the time. It was hardly natural that he should wish to marry a woman older than himself. I am, myself, realizing the folly of a marriage where there is great disparity in ages. Now, Gladys, if you wish me to help you, you must not hesitate to inform me what your own feelings are. What answer did you make to Max?

Gladys. Why, we agreed that we were too fond of each other to let Rose separate us, and that we would have to run away and be married. But how is it to be done, Mr. Oliver? She is going to station Hopkins at the gate to watch every one who goes in and out. Max will be unable to come to my window with the ladder as he promised, to-morrow night.

Mr. O. I will see Max and talk it over with him. We can easily bribe Hopkins or get him drunk enough to let you out.

Gladys. You are so good, Mr. Oliver. I am sure we shall be everlastingly grateful to you.

Mr. O. I don't deserve so much gratitude as you think, perhaps. I wish to see Max Morris married partly from sel-

fish motives. Then, no doubt, my foolish little wife would be cured of her infatuation for him.

Gladys. Yes, I am sure she would. She was here a few moments ago, and said that she felt quite conscience-stricken over giving you pain. She was looking for you.

Mr. O. Is that so Gladys? (*Rubbing his hands.*) The dear child; I feel hopeful that I may bring her heart back to her loving old hubby. Keep up your spirits my dear. As it is hardly probable your guardian will give her consent to your marriage, we must manage to steal you away. I am going to see Morris. Be on the lookout for us to-morrow night when the house is quiet, and everybody asleep but yourself. (*Starting away, but returning.*) By the way, if my wife should return, tell her that *I* said that I was going to jump in the water and drown myself.

Gladys. But that would be untrue, Mr. Oliver. Besides would it not cause her too great a shock?

Mr. O. No; unfortunately, she cares too little for me to be much shocked. Merely give it as a message from me. You need not know whether there is any truth in it or not.

Gladys. Very well, sir. We are regular conspirators.

Mr. O. So we are, so we are. Well I'm off to drown myself—more liable to drown Hopkins in brandy to-morrow night. (*Exit R.*)

(*Enter Mrs. Vane, Mrs. Oliver and Miss Sarah, L.*)

Mrs. Vane. I have given Hopkins orders to watch closely every one who enters or leaves our gate, and keep it locked at night. So now, Gladys, an elopement is impossible. To make assurance doubly sure, I mean to continue to lock you in for awhile at least. This school-room door shall be locked and the door at the end of that little hall, (*pointing to L.*) so that you will have access to your bed-room and Miss Sarah's. She will have a duplicate key. I can depend upon it that your Aunt will keep an eye upon you.

Miss Sarah. Yes, I shall keep two very sharp ones upon her; though I could watch a miserable little slip of a girl like that with only half an eye, while the remainder of my vision was devoted to my reading.

Gladys. No matter what my size may be, I occupy a space that each of you would like to fill—Max Morris's heart.

Mrs. Vane (*rushing towards Gladys and shaking fists in her face*). How dare you be so impertinent!

Miss Sarah (*running toward Gladys and clawing the air*). I could scratch her eyes out.

Mrs. Vane. I shall soon spoil your face so Max Morris will never look at it again.

Mrs. Oliver. Come, now, ladies ; two against one is rather uneven. I mean to see fair play. Let the girl alone !

(Mrs Vane and Miss Sarah fall back.)

Mrs. O. Gladys, some one told me that Mr. Oliver had been here. Where did he say he was going ?

Gladys. If I told you his message, perhaps it might shock you too much.

Mrs. O. Tell me, don't keep me in suspense !

Gladys. He said I must tell you that he had gone to jump in the water and drown himself.

Mrs. O. (dropping on her knees and clasping her hands.) Oh, my poor, good husband !

(Curtain.)

END OF SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE—*House and lawn, with ladder leaning against upper window. Max Morris standing, c.*

Morris. Phew ! By George, that ladder was heavy ! I wish Gladys would come, now that everything is ready. Besides I am anxious to see how she looks in the disguise I gave her.

(Gladys appears at upper window in suit of man's clothing.)

Morris. Are you ready, dear.

Gladys. Yes, Max ; but why in the world did you throw me such a suit as this ?

Morris. You are at perfect liberty to say why in the something else, now that you are turned into a boy. But is there not danger of being detected if we talk ?

Gladys. No ; Aunt Sarah and I are the only members of the family who sleep in this part of the house, and she is quite sound asleep. Her room is at the far end of the little hall leading from the school-room.

Morris. Shall I come up and bring you down ?

Gladys. No, I am too manly to need any help. I can take myself down.

Morris. Well, make a start.

Gladys. Not while you are looking at me ; turn your back.

(Morris turns face towards audience. Gladys starts down ladder. Comes down first few rounds turned one way, and then tries the next few rounds turned the other way. Morris suddenly turns towards her.)

Gladys (screaming). Oh! Oh! Don't look at me!

Morris. I was afraid you would fall.

Gladys. I shall fall, really, if you look at me.

Morris (turning face to audience). Well, I'll try to endure it, but don't be so long. I mean take your time so as not to fall.

[*Gladys comes down remainder of ladder.*]

Gladys. Thank heavens I am on terra firma.

Morris. At least you are out of the house.

[*Turns toward her.*]

Gladys (holding up lace handkerchief and screaming). Oh! oh! oh! Don't look at me!

Morris. But Gladys, if we are going to run away together how can I help from looking at you?

Gladys. You must avoid it all you can.

Morris. Very well. How do you know Miss Sarah is asleep?

Gladys. I went in her room and looked at her. If she had been awake, I meant to merely peep in her door and make some excuse to speak to her. She was snoring profoundly.

Morris. Did she snore scientifically?

Gladys. I don't know; but it must have been in some unknown language, Russian, Choctaw, or something of the kind. I laughed so that I almost awakened her, to think how frightened she would be if she should look up and see a man standing in her room, or rather a boy.

Morris. Our task is only half accomplished, Gladys. The most difficult part is to induce Hopkins to let us pass him at the gate. He saw me enter alone two hours ago, on the pretext of visiting Mrs. Vane.

Gladys. He will be filled with surprise to see a strange young man go out with you.

Morris. He is too much filled with Mr. Oliver's brandy, I hope, by this time, to leave room for surprise. I left our old friend near the gate, armed with a good sized bottle.

Gladys. Such a plot is awfully wicked of both you and Mr. Oliver.

Morris. In this case the end justifies the means. Better have Hopkins a little drunker than usual one night, than have my dear little girl locked up in a convent.

Gladys. Let us be off. We are lingering too long.

Morris. We have to wait for Mr. Oliver's signal.

Gladys. Why did you bring me this sort of disguise?

Morris. Because it was necessary. The police are no-

tified to arrest Miss Gladys Vane. They have no instructions as to any young gentleman who might be seen with me.

Gladys (marching up and down stage). Am I not a heavy swell?

Morris. I should say you were quite a light weight swell. But if it were day time you'd be making conquests of all the little girls along the streets.

Gladys. By Jingo! Here comes Hopkins!

(Enter Hopking, R., staggering.)

Hopkins. I say Mr. Mor-morris what 'ave kept you so late? Can't you 'urry h'up a little, so I can lock the gates and go to bed?

Morris. Certainly, Hopkins, we are ready to go.

Hop. 'Ello! Where did you pick h'up that little fellow? Didn't bring him in to see Mrs. Vane, did you?

Morris. Yes; he came to call with me this evening.

Hop. Come to think h'of it you did—didn't 'ave no friend with you w'en you-you passed h'in at that 'ere gate a couple er h'hours ago. You wouldn't 'ave brought sich a little fellow as that 'ere in to see a lady h'of Mrs. Vane's h'age.

Morris. I brought him to see Miss Gladys, Hopkins. He is my friend, Mr. Harry Little.

Hop. You h'oughter to call him Little 'Arry instead h'of 'Arry Little; but he didn't come to see Miss Gladys, eos she's locked h'up, and h'ar'nt allowed to see no company.

Morris. Well we haven't time to answer all your questions. Come, Harry, we must be going.

(Starts to go. Hopkins bars the way.)

Hop. No you can't go yet. I've got the gate key in my pocket. Mr. Oliver wanted me to come h'out and take another drink with 'im, but I was gettin' too blarsted sleepy, so I pushed 'im out quick and locked the door. Not very perlite in me neither. I'll be blowed if 'e h'ar'nt a fine, good, generous gentleman, h'as h'ever was. But 'ow h'about this little dude you've got there? I h'aint h'instructed to let no such as 'im neither h'out nor h'in. Say, sonny, h'l-h'I h'aint 'eard the sound of your voice yet. H'ar'nt you got no gift of gab what some h'ever?

Gladys. To be sure, my good fellow: but don't keep us standing talking so long. We are sleepy as well as you. The sooner you let us out the sooner you will get to bed yourself.

Hop. That's sho, that's sho; but first let me study a bit. Where did you come from? Must 'ave grown h'out h'of one of them lilies h'in the flower bed, didn't yer?

Gladys. Do I look like a "Jersey Lily?"

Hop. Well, not presactly. Yet you don't look so very masculine neither. Come shake hands with a fellow, and be polite like Mr. Oliver was. (*They shake hands.*) Lord! Lord! 'ow soft and white 'is 'ands is. You must have been raised on pap, sonny.

Gladys. Yes, my pap is so rich that I've never had to work any in my life.

Hop. I don't believe 'e's rich. You h'aint scattered no ducats h'over 'ere h'in my direction yet. You see, Mr. Morris, I h'aint quite h'as druuk h'as one might suppose, h'arfter sheering a bottle h'of whisky with Mr. h'Oliver. You'll 'ave to prove as 'ow you're rich my young little Mr. Little.

Gladys. Certainly, my good fellow, certainly, here's a piece of silver for you.

(*Feels in all her pockets in vain for money.*)

Gladys (*drawing hand from last pocket and holding it up*). It's stuck to my fingers.

Morris. What has? The money?

Gladys. No, this piece of chewing gum.

Hop. No fellow that had any sense h'of manliness would chew gum. You can't put chewing gum h'of h'on me for silver

Gladys. I hav'n't any change. I say, Morris, old fellow, lend me a little spondulix until to-morrow. I'll get some from the governor then.

Morris. Why, yes, Harry, my purse is always at your service. (*Takes out purse.*) There help yourself.

Hop. Take plenty while you're h'at it. H'it may take a good deal to get this 'ere key h'out h'of my pocket.

Gladys (*taking piece of money*). Thanks, old fellow, very much. Here, Hopkins, (*giving him money*).

Hop (*imitating her tone*). Thanks, old fellow, very much. Here Hopkins. (*Dropping money into his pocket.*) Now that my little dandy friend 'as been so generous and free, h'I'll offer you a treat. Suppose I can be generous, too. 'Ere's some segars. Let's 'ave a little friendly smoke. We'll see h'if this little dude can smoke as well as chew gum.

Gladys. Yes, indeed, I can smoke, but I prefer a cigarette. Morris have you a cigarette?

Morris. Here is one.

(*They light and smoke their cigars sitting. Hopkins on ladder, and Gladys and Morris on rustic bench.*)

Hop. I tell you w'at h'I'll do my rich little Mr. 'Arry Little h'if you'll give me a gold piece h'I'll h'unlock, the gate and let you and Mr. Morris h'out.

Gladys. Let us out now and to-morrow I will give yon the gold piece.

Hop. No; I want to see the cash. A bird in the 'and h'is worth two in the bush. H'I'm a risking h'of losing my situation.

(Morris gives Gladys gold piece which she gives to Hopkins.)

Hop (looking intently at Gladys). H'It h'appears to me h'all of a sudden like as h'if 'Arry do look uncommon like Miss Gladys. You h'ar'nt 'er twin brother, h'are you.

Gladys. No, I'am her cousin; but come, give us the key this instant. You have already been paid for it.

Hop. Your 'air is just the same color as 'ers for all the world. H'I'll swear its got the same reddish tinge like.

Gladys. What color was the whisky Mr. Oliver gave you. Hopkins? Red or white?

Hop. It was red.

Gladys. Well, that's the reason why my hair looks red to you. It doesn't look so to any one else. Morris, what color is my hair.

Morris. Brown, quite brown.

Hop. H'It must have been the red whisky.

Gladys. Why, of course. If you had drunk brown Dublin stout, now, my hair would have looked brown to you.

Hop. Ish that sho? Ish that sho? Brown ale's particular good. Wish h'I 'ad some.

Gladys. Come let us go get some out at the tavern.

Hop. Would if h'I wasn't sho awful sleepy.

Morris. Give us the key and we will go and fetch you some.

Hop. No, Mishter Morris, h'I h'ar'nt got quite sho drunk h'as you think I am. Why, dammish sir, h'I'm strong as a h'ox. H'I'd like to see h'if this little dude 'as got any muscle. Come, pretty boy, let's rastle. *(Rolls up his sleeves and comes toward Gladys with clenched fists. She rolls up sleeves and comes toward him with clenched fists).*

Gladys. I can whip a big cowardly, drunken fellow like you easily enough,

Morris (jumping up). Come, Hopkins, 'fight a man of your size, and not one so small as he.

Hop. H'I've got a fancy to whip this dainty little gentleman.

(*Takes Gladys by the arm.*)

Morris (*springing forward and clutching Hopking by the throat.*) How dare you touch her?

Hop [*backing to ladder and sitting down*]. H'I didn't touch no 'er. H'I touched 'im. Lord, Mr. Morris 'ow you did 'urt my throat.

Morris. Give me the key or I will hurt you worse.

Hop. I can't do that till h'I know who h'it h'is you 'ave got 'ere that is both a 'er and a 'im. I'd lo-lose my situation.

Morris (*clutching Hop. again*). I'll make you give up the key, and if you yell you will be a dead man in two seconds.

Gladys. Hold him fast, Max, there is a rope. I can tie him in a moment while you hold him. (*Picks up rope and ties Hopkins to ladder*).

Hop. Oh, Mishter Morris? Spare my waluable life!

Morris (*still holding him*). Hold your tongue or I will cut it out with my knife.

Gladys (*tying rope*). And then, Hopkins, you could never taste another drop of whisky or ale.

Hop. Oh 'eavens! H'I'll be quiet.

Gladys. Now then, he is tied. Let us get the key.

Morris. Which pocket is it in Hopkins?

Hop. In the left 'and west pocket, sir.

Morris (*taking out key*). If you make the least racket, Hopkins, for a half hour after our departure—

Gladys. I'll come back and scratch your face.

(*Ereunt, running. R.*)

Hop. She or 'ee, which h'ever h'it h'is, is jealous h'of my beauty, and wants to spoil h'it scratching my face. (*Screams.*) Oh, 'Eavens! Murder! Murder! Thieves! Ob! Glory! 'Elp! 'Elp!

(*Miss Sarah appears at upper window in night dress and ridiculous old-fashioned night cap.*)

Miss Sarah. Great heavens! Hopkins, what is the matter? Where are the thieves, in the house or out?

Hop. They 'ave gone m'am. The h'only thing w'at they stole was the gate key.

Miss Sarah. Why didn't you run after them.

Hop. For two good reasons, mum. I had neither the use h'of me legs nor me h'arms. The gin took me legs and the rope's got me h'arms.

Miss Sarah. Do you mean that you are tied?

Hop. Yes, mum; would you be so kind as to come down and give me a little 'elp?

Miss Sarah. How did this ladder come here?

Hop. I didn't know there was any ladder e're, mum.

Miss Sarah. Why, Hopkins you must be blind. You are tied to the ladder.

Hop. So I h'am, mum; h'I h'aint noticed h'it h'afore.

(Miss Sarah disappears from window.)

Hop. H'I must 'ave been about 'arf blind—blind drunk.
(Enter Mrs. Vane in dishabille, with hair in curl papers and candle in hand, L. Lights turned up.)

Mrs. Vane. What is the matter? Oh, my poor nerves! Hopkins, what is the matter?

Hop. Will you be so kind h'as to h'untie me, mum, and then I can talk more free like.

Mrs. Vane. Oh, my poor nerves! I'm afraid I shall faint. We evidently need a man around the house who can be head of the family.

(Enter Miss Sarah, L., in dressing gown and wig instead of night-cap.)

Hop. There 'ave been two men 'ere, mum; least-ways there was one h'of 'um a man.

Miss Sarah (untying him). And who tied you to this ladder?

Hop. It tied me to the ladder, while Mr. Morris held me.

Mrs. Vane. Was Mr. Morris here?

Hop. Yes, mum, 'e come to see you about 'arf past h'eight o'clock.

Mrs. Vane. I never laid eyes on him.

Hop. Didn't you see Mr. 'Arry Little, neither?

Mrs. Vane. The fellow is distracted.

Miss Sarah. No, he is drunk. I smell the brandy on his breath.

Hop (rising to his feet). No, mum, I h'aint drunk now. no matter w'at I might 'ave been awhile h'ago, when Mr. Oliver made me—nigh about forced me—to drink so much brandy.

Miss Sarah. Was he here, too?

Hop. 'E was h'at the gate, mum, h'and 'e fairly poured the brandy down h'as sober a man h'as ever lived, mum. But h'I got sober, h'all of a a suddint like, w'en they tied me and threatened to kill me.

Mrs. Vane. Who threatened to kill you?

Hop. Mr. Morris and the female dude of the male persuasion.

Miss Sarah. Hopkins, are you drunk, still? Try to tell us who it was with Mr. Morris.

Hop. I wish somebody would tell me who h'it was. 'E called 'isself Mr. 'Arry Little.

Mrs. Vane. A man?

Hop. If I don't know, mam. 'E was dressed like a boy, but Mr. Morris told me not to touch 'er. I h'asked 'er or 'im h'if h'it was twin brother to Miss Gladys, 'e looked so much like 'er; but it said it was 'er cousin.

Miss Sarah. And did she go off with Mr. Morris?

Hop. She, mum.

Miss Sarah. Yes, the girl dressed in man's attire?

Hop. The pretty dude, mum, be it 'e or she, 'ave gone h'off with Mr. Morris.

Mrs. Vane. Do you think it was Gladys, Miss Sarah?

Miss Sarah. Yes, Mrs. Vane, my mathematical mind is quicker at solving mysteries than yours. Besides don't you see the ladder?

Mrs. Vane. Good gracious! Gladys has escaped with Max, my Max, and perhaps by this time they are married.

Miss Sarah. In that case he is not your Max. Let us cease talking and act.

Mrs. Vane. Oh! what is to be done?

Miss Sarah. Why send Hopkins to set the police after them.

Mrs. Vane. Hopkins, go quickly for the police. Offer them money for me and I shall pay it. If you succeed in bringing back Gladys unmarried, I will line your pockets with gold. Are you certain you are sober enough to understand?

Hop. Yes, mum, my legs is quite steady onced more, and me powerful brain h'is h'active h'again.

Miss Sarah. Don't lose any time. Be off with you.

(*Exit Hop, R, running.*)

Mrs. Vane [*looking after him*]. Run, Hopkins, run!

(*Curtain.*)

END OF THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE—Same as in third act. *Miss Sarah* sitting and *Mrs. Vane* walking impatiently.

Mrs. Vane. It has been a wretched half-hour of suspense, Miss Sarah, and has seemed as long as three days. Perhaps by this time she has married Max, my Max.

Miss Sarah. Perhaps she has, only in that case he would not be *your* Max. One would presume that Gladys could lay the first claim to him. Hasn't that yet dawned upon your massive intelligence?

Mrs. Vane. Oh, Miss Sarah, I am so miserable and forlorn! We do so decidedly need a man at the head of this house. It is a great deal of trouble and worry to me to manage my money affairs.

Miss Sarah (aside). I wish I had that sort of trouble. It would not worry me much.

Mrs. Vane. I hope you don't suppose I would marry a man who was in love with another woman?

Miss Sarah. No, Mrs. Vane, certainly not; people don't generally do what they can't do.

Mrs. Vane. If my poor Patrick had lived, I might have been spared all this trouble. This is terribly trying to my poor nerves. Oh, why was my poor Patrick killed?

Miss Sarah. Most probably because he could not help himself; but if you think there may be any other reason we might go to a spiritual medium and find out.

Mrs. Vane. Mr. Vane was a good man, and a good husband, Miss Sarah, with all his faults.

Miss Sarah. Yes, he was a very generous man, I am sure, though he did speak with an Irish brogue, and his education was not the finest in the world.

Mrs. Vane. Don't say with an Irish brogue, if you please. Call it an Hibernian accent. Yes' when I think of Patrick, in my present troubles, Miss Sarah, I almost believe he would be a comfort to me now if he had lived. But there is no use in grieving over what is past. If Max Morris is married to Gladys, what can I do? By nature I am a poor dependent, clinging creature. I need a man's strong arm upon which to lean; a man's great mind to guide me through all the shoals and perils of life.

Miss Sarah. I rather think you do. The sooner you get one the better. You have plenty of money; why don't you go to London or Paris and hunt?

Mrs. Vane. And hunt, Miss Sarah!

Miss Sarah. Yes, for the man's strong arm and great mind. You would have no trouble in finding what you sought.

Mrs. Vane. I think I shall. Yes I shall go to Paris for awhile and then to London. As you say, I would have no trouble in finding what I sought. I am still a young and charming woman. But I can never forgive Max Morris for overlooking my attractions. If they only arrest him before he is married to Gladys, I shall make him suffer. Don't you feel so yourself about it, Miss Sarah, since he has played us such a trick (*pointing to ladder*).

Miss Sarah. I don't see what could be gained by making him suffer. If he is in love with the *girl* we can not make him fall in love with either of us; and that settles the matter. I was angry at first, but now that I have had time to grow cool, I don't see any reason why we should have sent Hopkins to pursue them. As for me, I have the force of will to forget the pair of silly lovers in a short time. Having my natural strength of character, I need no man's strong arm upon which to lean.

Mrs. Vane. What do you mean to do now, that Gladys will need your care no longer?

Miss Sarah. I have a modest income on which I can manage to live in the city, where I can have the advantage of mixing in literary circles and attending scientific lectures. All my earthly interests shall hereafter be centered in the cultivation of my intellect. I have already written a chapter of my book on the laws of molecular action, which I hope to finish this year. You see I shall soon start on a glorious career, which will associate me with the march of science.

Mrs. Vane (looking off stage). Who is this alighting from a carriage at our gate? Ah, it is Mrs. Oliver. I wonder if she is still seaching for her husband?

Miss Sarah. Perhaps so. She is another one of the weak women who think it necessary to have a man's strong arm.

(Enter Mrs. Oliver, R.)

Mrs. Oliver. Mrs. Vane, is my husband here?

Mrs. Vane. No, Mrs. Oliver; but he has been here at our gate to-night.

Mrs. O. Yes, I have been told by the police that he was seen at your gate, so I entered my carriage and drove here immediately, hoping to find him in your house. This has been a terrible night of suspense.

Miss Sarah. Why not ask the whereabouts of Max Morris instead of Mr. Oliver.

Mrs. Oliver. Because the anxiety of this night has taught me where my heart belongs.

(Enter Mr. Oliver, R.)

Mrs. Oliver (running to him and embracing him). Oh, my dear husband, I am so glad to see you! You are not drowned, are you?

Mr. Oliver. No, I hardly think I am. But, although I am not dead, I almost believe I am walking in my sleep. I feel as if life were strangely unreal. You never were so affectionate to me before.

Mrs. Oliver. Because I never knew till now where to find my own happiness. What a fright you have given me. I have suffered quite as much as you, I know.

Mr. Oliver (kissing her forehead and patting her cheek). It's the best and sweetest and loveliest little wife in the world. I believed all the time that her affections would soon return to her devoted old hubby.

Miss Sarah (aside). When will this nauseous scene be over?

Mrs. Vane. Now, Mr. Oliver, if you are through with your reconciliation, I would like to be informed what has become of my step-daughter and ward? You are in a measure responsible for her disappearance. I am very angry with you, and hold you to account for the part you have taken in this shameful affair.

Mr. Oliver. What can be gained, madam, by holding me to account now? "There is no use in crying over spilt milk." I considered that I was doing a kind action to help that poor girl to a good husband. I knew and liked her father, and felt sorry for her, and did gladly help to deliver her from a very trying life in this house.

Mrs. Vane. Your insinuations are insulting, sir.

Mrs. Oliver (looking off stage). I see some one coming in the gate. It is a policeman bringing a man and a boy.

Mrs. Vane. A boy! That must be Gladys.

Mrs. Sarah (looking off stage). Yes, it is Gladys.

Mrs. Oliver to Mr. Oliver. Have they gone mad? I see only a boy and a man, who looks like Mr. Morris, and behind them a fellow who looks like Hopkins.

Mr. Oliver. The boy you see coming is Gladys, my pet. Something has gone wrong.

Mrs. Oliver. Good gracious? They all talk as if they were beside themselves, even my husband.

Mrs. Vane (calling). Gladys, you awful girl, are you married?

(*Enter a policeman, bringing Gladys and Morris, with the assistance of Hopkins, R.*)

Mrs. Vane. Answer me, you miserable, shameless creature, are you married?

Gladys. No; your spies and emissaries were too quick for us, and arrested us on our way to the priest's house.

Mrs. Vane. Thank heaven! I have you in my power again. So you were going to be married in that sort of a garb, were you? Don't you feel ashamed of yourself?

Gladys. Not in the least. This would make a jolly wed-

ding dress. You would be glad enough, yourself, to be married to a fellow who looked as well as I do.

Mrs. Vane (to Morris). And you, sir, were willing to marry this pert young minx?

Morris. I not only was willing, but that is still my positive intention. You have triumphed temporarily, madam, in separating us, but your triumph is not by any means final. We will continue faithful to each other, Gladys, and watch and wait for our chance to be reunited.

Gladys. Yes, you can depend on me, dear Max. This "lark" to-night has taught me how much latent force of character I had. *(To Mrs. Vane and Miss Sarah.)* I am a dangerous fellow to "monkey" with. I am equal to the "Boy Pirate of the Black Tiger Ship," or "The Young Hero of the Wild West—The Terror of the Demon Red Skins." I am as awe-inspiring as a survivor of an arctic expedition from the Cannibal Isles.

Miss Sarah. Oh, horrors! What an awful girl I have for a niece. Gladys, I disown you.

Gladys. Do you? Oh how grateful I am! Rose, can't you manage to disown me, too? Let me take myself and my money and my lover out of your hands and go.

Morris. As for me, I am not in her hands, and never was. May I ask, Madam, why you had me arrested, and why you keep this policeman standing here to guard me? You could recover your ward, but you had no right whatever to cause my arrest.

Gladys. It was done out of consideration for us, Max, so we would not have to be separated.

Hopkins. H'I h'arrested the gentleman mum. H'and h'it was h'only through my valuable h'assistance that h'either h,of 'em was h'apprehended. You won't forget me reward, mum? This h's my prisoner. *(Laying hand on Morris' shoulder.)*

Morris (striking off Hopkins' hand.) Hands off, you mercenary scoundrel.

Mrs. Vane. I had no right to cause your arrest, Mr. Morris, and I gave no such orders. I mean to have my revenge for your perfidy, but that must be postponed several days. *(To policeman.)* I offered a reward for the capture of my ward. You can go now, if you please, and come to-morrow morning to receive your pay. *(Policeman removes hat and bows in acknowledgement. Exit, R.)*

Gladys. "A reward for the capture of my ward!" ha! ha! ha! one would think that I was a dangerous wild beast es-

caped from its keepers in the menagerie. Though this house probably did somewhat resemble a menagerie when my escape was discovered. Rose, were there howls of rage?

Mrs. Vane. There may be when I lock you up again.

Gladys. Aunt Sarah, I would have bidden you an affectionate farewell, but you were snoring so eloquently, I had'nt the heart to interrupt you. (*Embraces and kisses Miss Sarah*) Now you can experience the novelty of having a man to hug and kiss you, with a little help of the imagination.

Miss Sarah. (*Pushing her away*) Don't touch me. I am willing to see you marry that heartless young man. You suit each other capitally. Perhaps he admires your unmaidenly style of independence.

Morris. I admire everything she does, madame, especially when it is all for love of Max Morris.

Gladys. I only wish I were a boy, and I'd show you all how independent I could be—No, I shouldn't like to be a boy either, I forgot about Max.

Mrs. Vane. You seem to have forgotten all sense of womanliness. If you had any regard for your reputation——

Mr. Oliver. Excuse me, Mrs. Vane, you are the one whose duty it is to guard your ward's reputation. You should not have interfered with their marriage. After the escapade of to-night, you surely must understand that the sooner you allow their marriage to take place the better it will be for the good name of your step-daughter.

Morris. What objection can be brought against me? My habits are good, my descent is aristocratic, and my fortune is fair.

Mrs. Vane. You think my feelings in the matter should not be considered in the least. I have been wronged.

Mrs. Oliver. Do forgive and forget, Mrs. Vane, and consent to their marriage. See how my dear husband has forgiven my vagaries. There is an example for you.

Mrs. Vane. I can never forgive Max Morris for his perfidy.

Gladys. The difference is, you see, Mrs. Oliver, that you have got the man, but Rose is left without any.

Mrs. Vane. You shall suffer for such insulting speeches, Miss; and Max Morris shall also suffer. Your engagement to me was announced publically, Mr. Morris, and you received congratulations. I intend to sue you for breach of promise.

(*Enter Patrick Vane, c.*)

Pat. Vane. Go it asy, go it slow me darlint. A woman can have only one husband in this peaceful counthry.

Mrs. Vane. Merciful heavens! It is Patrick Vane or his ghost, (*running from stage, L. screaming*) Oh! Oh! Oh!

Pat. Vane. Divil a bit of a ghost am oi, begorrah. Come back to the arrums of ye poor ould Pathrick. Don't be afeard. (*Enter Mrs. Vane, L. She remains standing near entrance quaking with fear.*)

Pat. Vane. How are ye, Mrs. Oliver. How are ye Oliver, auld b'y. (*Shaking hands.*) Roight substantial corrupse aint oi. While ye was all a'burryin' of me in the churroh yard, I wus thravelin' about for me health and to soothe me feelin's, because me and Rose had had a little shindy 'o worruds, and had parted unforgivin' loike. I must say this is not altogether a cheerful reception to me home. Ye all seem afeard and unpleasantly surprised loike.

Miss Sarah (coming forward and shaking hands). I am glad to see you Mr. Vane, I, at least, am not afraid of you. My mind is more active than that of the others and can take in the situation more quickly.

Pat. Vane. Och, Sary, me dear, ye always did have more nerve than most women, or men either. Oi let Rose burry me frind that was killed instead of me own corrupse. Oi thought if oi stayed away awhoile her feelins would be softened towards me, and she would forget and forgive. Be aul the saints in hiven, I belave its meself she's forgot.

Gladys (stepping forward). I am more glad to see you than any one, dear father; but at first I was too startled to speak.

Pat. Vane. Git out wid ye, ye impidint boy. Do ye think dat I don't know an imposthor? I niver had a son in me loif unless he's born sense me absence in the last fifteen months; in that case, me infant, ye must have growed powerful fast.

Gladys. Oh, father!

Pat. Vane. Don't "Ofather" me an' oi won't father you. You can't play no confidence game on Pathrick Vane, Git out o' me way, will ye, young man? Come, Rose, don't be afeard. Put a smoile on ye charmin' lips, and make belave to give a welcome to yer ould husban', and if we can't be reconciled, I'll jist kiss me little choild, Gladys, see that she is well provided for, and go thin back to me thravels.

Mrs. Vane (running forward and throwing her arms around Mr. Vane's neck). I don't need to make believe to be glad to see you, Patrick. I was frightened at first—you know how weak my nerves are—because I had thought of you as in heaven during the last fifteen months. Miss Sarah is my witness that I said, not an hour ago, "If my poor Patrick had lived what a comfort he would be to me now," and that we certainly needed a man at the head of this house.

Pat. Vane. Am oi the man, meself, that is needed at the head of this house; that's the question.

Mrs. Vane. Yes, indeed; I'm sure I'm glad you're not dead, that is, I mean, that you've come home.

Mr. Oliver. How did the strange mistake about your death occur, Mr. Vane?

Pat. Vane. It was the gintleman sitting bisoide me in the car whose head and face were smashed up entoirely. Oi was only kilt wid fear, but oi crawled out o' the wreck and left me valise behind, becos' it was caught in among the broken sates o' the car. Oi wint on to the nearest city wid the survoivers, and left me valise to be owned by the other dead man. He was identifoid for Pathrick Vane and faith when oi read it in the news-papers oi didn't know whether oi was dead or alive.

Mrs. Vane. You should have thought of the anguish the news caused me.

Gladys. You should have thought of your forlorn little Gladys.

Pat. Vane. Yes, I did think of me darlint little Gladys, and oi would have wept me heart out thinkin' o' her, if I hadn't nearly split me soides laughin' to think how glad Rose might have been for the chance to get a young handthome husband in moi place. I was thinkin' all the toime what a foine, handthome, rich widdy she was makin'. He! he! he!

Mrs. Vane. O, Patrick! You might have known that I didn't want any husband but you.

Pat. Vane. Well, oi thought oi'd give ye a chance to enj'y yeself a bit widout ye Pathrick, so, as oi had me pockets full o' money, oi skipped off to thravel around the worruld and improve meself. Whin me money was about to give out, I began to sing "what's the worruld to a man whin his wife is a widdy?" So here I am, albeit ye hev burried me in the churruch yard—where I seen me tombstone the day.

Gladys (to Morris). It would grieve me that he does not recognize me if I were not so overjoyed at his return. Isn't he a dear, delightful, jolly father?

Morris. Yes, indeed; he will set all our troubles right.

Pat. Vane. But where is me choild, Rose—me bright-eyed little Gladys? Not seeing her face hera, I'm almost afeard to ask.

Gladys (stepping up to Mr Vane). Here I am, father, long-ing to hug you like a bear.

Pat. Vane. Yis, it would be a sort o' bearish hug, least-ways uncivilized, begorra, for two men to hug one another. Will somebody take this crazy little dude to the lu-nat-ic assylum?

(*Gladys steps back and rests her head upon Morris' shoulder.*)

Pat. Vane. I say, where is me choild Rose? Faith and can't somebody spake?

Mrs. Vane (pointing to Gladys.) There is your child.

Pat. Vane (looking around at the others.) Can't somebody else tell me the thruth?

All the others (pointing to Gladys.) There is your child.

Pat. Vane (putting his hand to his head.) Are they all gone mad, or am oi dhrunk?

Gladys (coming forward again). I am Gladys, father. Look in my face, and recall my voice.

Pat. Vane. Oh, go long wid ye! Don't be playin' av tricks on an auld man, Would ye be persuadin' av me that me Gladys was a b'y?

Gladys (taking off hat and dropping long hair on shoulders). A divil a bit av a b'y am oi, father, but jist ye own little gurrel, Gladys. Won't you belave me and kiss me?

Pat. Vane. Well I never kissed a b'y afore in me loife; but I'll have to take ye on thrust for a gurrel.

(*They embrace.*)

Gladys. If ye can't take me own worrid and testhimony for it, ask Max Morris there. He it is will tell ye that he was going to run away wid me an' marry me. That's the rason whoi oi'm a "wearin' the breeches."

Pat. Vane. Well that jist settles the matther. If Max Morris could take ye for a wife, begorrah, oi can take ye for me darter. Come here Max and shake hands wid ye auld frind, [*they shake hands*]. Now tell me phat was the rason ye wanted to run away wid me Gladys.

Morris. Because it was the only way I could get her. Her step-mother objected to our marriage. I threw that suit of boy's clothes in the window to Gladys, she came down that ladder to me, and we ran away. If Hopkins and the police had not caught us and brought us back, awhile ago, we'd have been married by this time.

Pat. Vane. So oi jist come home in tiome to fall into a pretty kittle o' fish where ye was all a bilin' up together and knocking heads. I hope, Rose, ye have been good to me little Gladys.

Gladys. Yes, yes, father, Rose and I got on beautifully together, because she was away all the time until the last ten days.

Pat. Vane. I hope ye aunt Sary was kind to ye. Sary, I thrustud to ye takin' care o' me little gurrel.

Miss Sarah. I have been her governess and have tried to give her a good education. She would not take much interest in psychological research, nor in scientific investigation. In philosophy, nor antropology, nor biology, nor in entomology.

Pat. Vane. Oh, the saints in hiven save us, oi should think not, indade. Gladys, was ye aunt Sary good to ye?

Gladys. Well—ye-s, pretty good, most alway sometimes, when she let me alone.

Pat. Vane. Sary, me dear, I intend to buy ye an annooity. becos ye was considerate an koind to me darter.

Miss Sarah. Oh, thank you, Mr. Vane, you always were the most generous man in the world.

Pat. Vane. Faith an' don't be a flatterin' o' me vanity, now, and givin' me blarney, Sary. But phat for did Gladys run away and git married to-night, Rose? What objecshin is it ye have to the weddin'?

Mrs. Vane. I thought Gladys was too young; but now that we have a man at the head of this house, of course, it is for you to decide whether to give her away.

Gladys. I was so valuable, father, that Rose did not like to take the responsibility of giving such a treasure to Mr. Morris. She thought he might manage to get along with a more inferior woman. Indeed, I think she had one picked out for him.

Mrs. Vane. But, my dear Gladys, I withdraw all suggestions and objections that I once made.

Gladys. You may be sure, my dear Rose that the name of the lady you once suggested for Mr. Morris shall never be mentioned. Mr. Morris will consign her to oblivion.

Morris. Most certainly. And now, Mr. Vane, I ask your consent to our marriage.

Pat. Vane. Oliver, auld b'y, do ye know any objecshin to Morris?

Mr. Oliver. None, whatever. He is the very man, of all in the world, I would like to see Gladys marry.

Pat. Vane. With such a char-ac-ter as that, Max Morris, given to ye by me best frind, I say take the gurrul, or b'y, whichever ye choose to call her, and may the Lord have mercy on ye sowl—I mane may the saints bless ye both foriver.

Gladys. To-morrow I'll wear a better wedding dress than this.

Pat. Vane. To-morrow we'll send for the praste.

Mr. Oliver. To-morrow we'll have a wedding.

Mrs. Oliver. To-morrow I shall be happier than I was to-day.

Mrs. Vane. To-morrow I shall wear my handsomest silk.

Miss. Sarah. To-morrow I shall go into the city and take my first step in the march of science.

Pat. Vane. To-morrow we'll dance a regular shindig,

Morris. To-morrow will give me my little Gladys.

Curtain.

THE END.

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